United States Patent [19]

Miller et al.

[11] **3,750,927**

[45] **Aug. 7, 1973**

[54] **APPARATUS AND CONTROL FOR ANGULAR ALIGNMENT OF INERTIA OR FRICTION WELDED PARTS**

[75] Inventors: **Robert G. Miller**, Metamora, **John W. Crayton**, Washington, **Charles G. Farmer**, Edelstein, **Ronald L. Satzler**, Metamora, all of Ill.

[73] Assignee: **Production Technology Inc.**, Peoria, Ill.

[22] Filed: **Nov. 12, 1971**

[21] Appl. No.: **198,256**

[52] **U.S. Cl.** **228/2**, 29/470.3, 156/73, 318/85

[51] **Int. Cl.** **B23k 27/00**

[58] **Field of Search** 228/2; 29/470.3; 156/73; 318/41, 85

[56] **References Cited**

UNITED STATES PATENTS

3,691,622	9/1972	Takagi et al.	228/2 X
3,563,444	2/1971	Loyd	156/73 X
3,541,669	11/1970	Yocum	228/2 X
3,538,592	11/1970	Padilla	29/470.3
3,564,703	2/1971	Kiwalle	29/470.3

Primary Examiner—J. Spencer Overholser
Assistant Examiner—Robert J. Craig
Attorney—Donald C. Feix et al.

[57] **ABSTRACT**

Friction welded parts are rotatively aligned by turning one part with respect to the other through the hot plastic interface after the parts have been welded. A position error circuit measures the relative angular position of the parts at the end of the weld and activates a rotary actuator to turn one part with respect to the other until the desired angular alignment is obtained.

2 Claims, 5 Drawing Figures

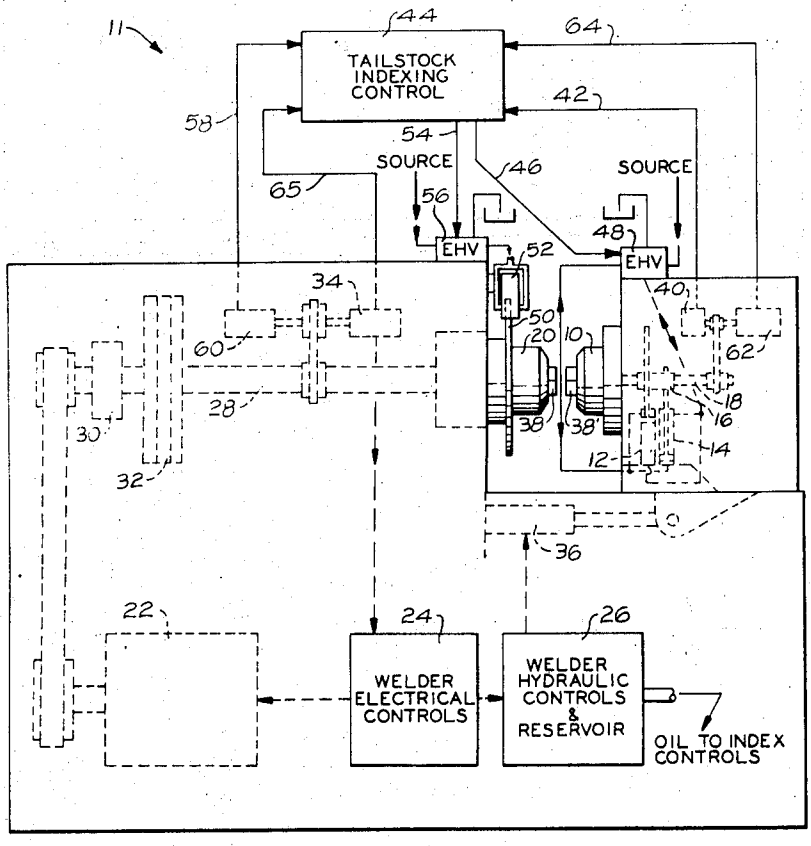
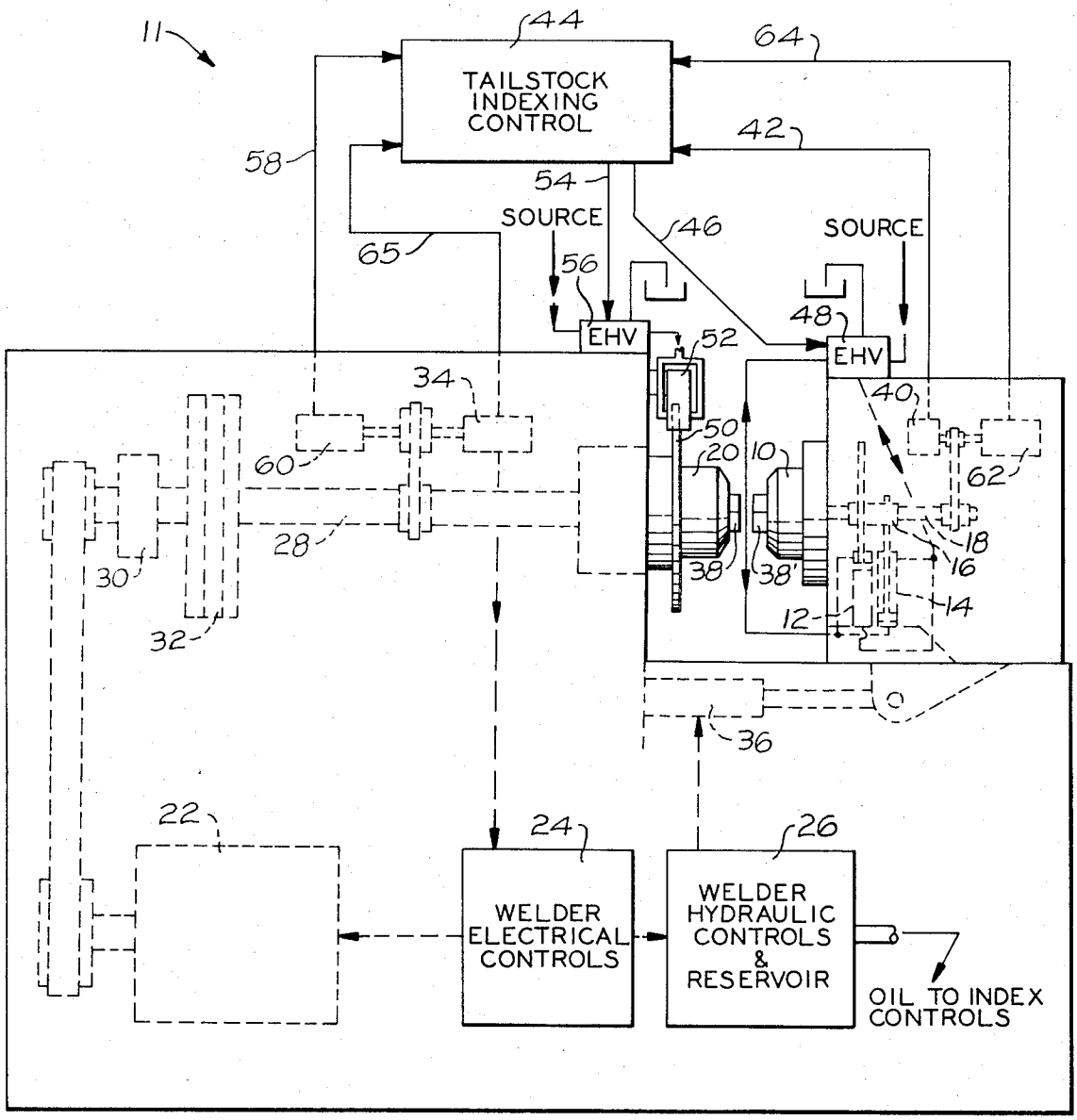


Fig. 1



INVENTORS
ROBERT G. MILLER
JOHN W. CRAYTON
CHARLES G. FARMER
RONALD L. SATZLER

BY
Fryer, Tjensvold, Feix, Phillips & Lampe
ATTORNEYS

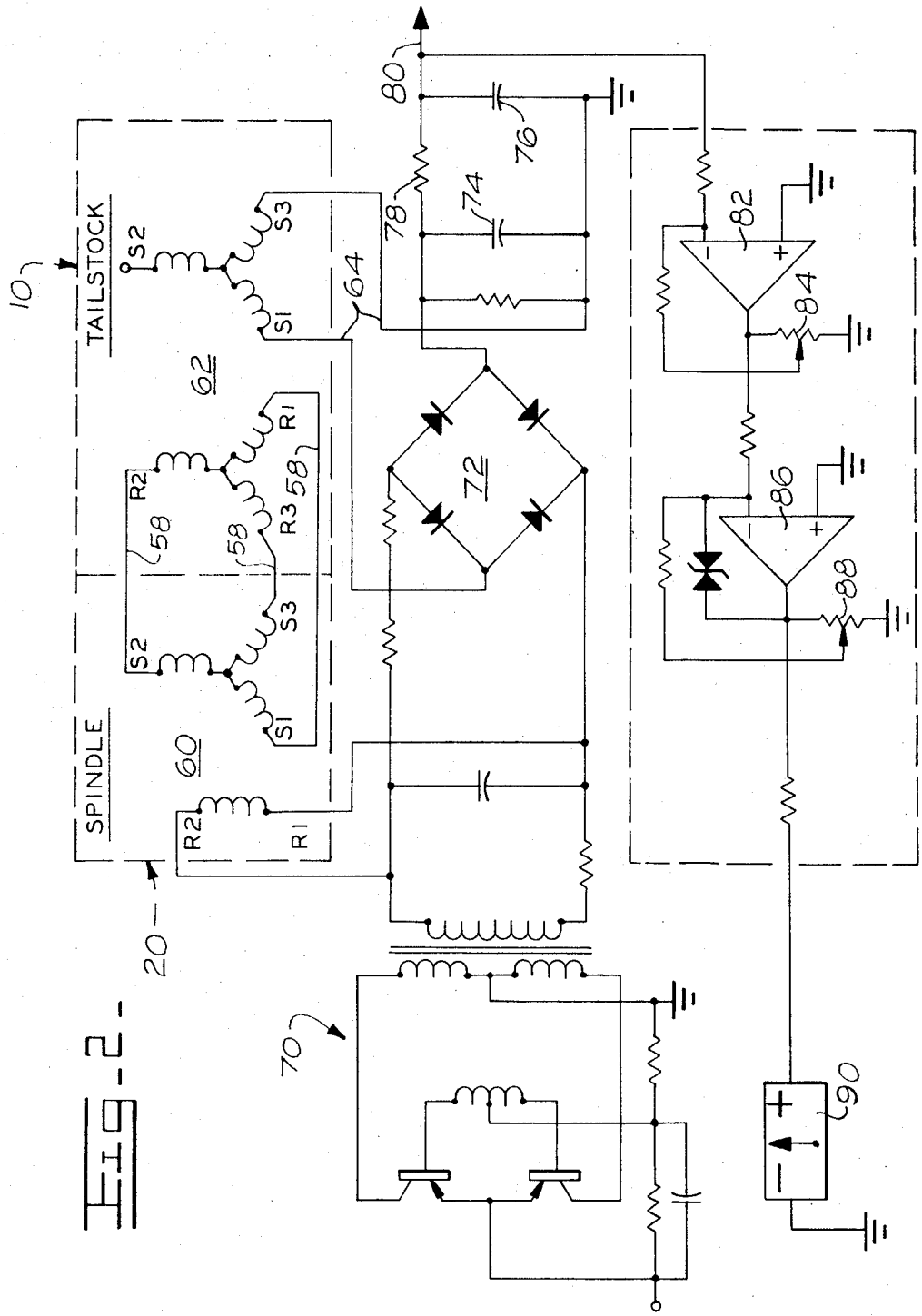


FIG-2-

INVENTORS
ROBERT G. MILLER
JOHN W. CRAYTON
CHARLES G. FARMER
RONALD L. SATZLER

BY
Fryer, Tjensvold, Feix, Phillips & Lampio
ATTORNEYS

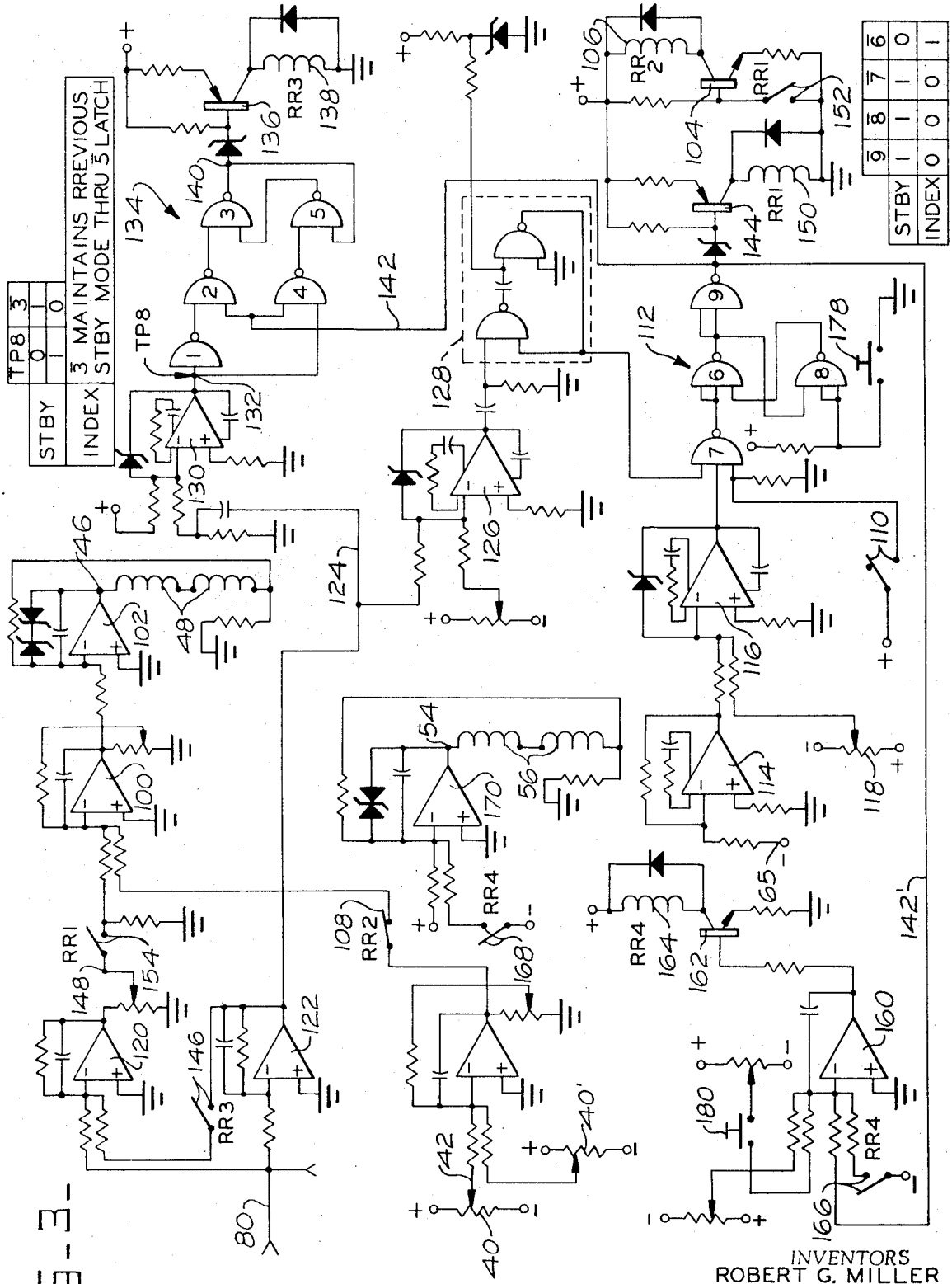
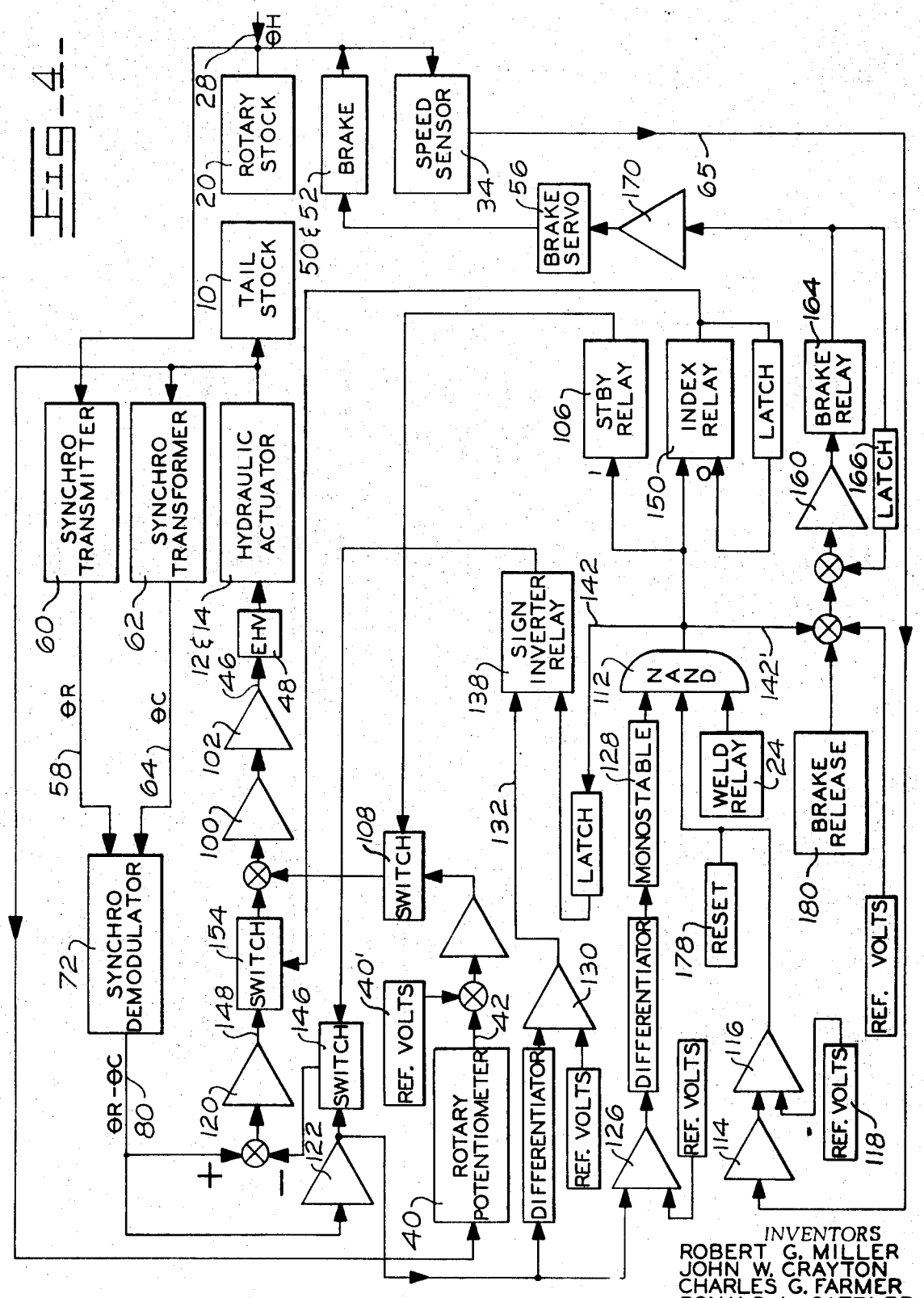


FIG-3-

INVENTORS
ROBERT G. MILLER
JOHN W. CRAYTON
CHARLES G. FARMER
RONALD L. SATZLER

BY
Fryer, Tjensvold, Feix, Phillips & Lampio
ATTORNEYS

FIG-4-



INVENTORS
ROBERT G. MILLER
JOHN W. CRAYTON
CHARLES G. FARMER
RONALD L. SATZLER

BY
Fryer, Tjensvold, Feiss, Phillips & Lempio
ATTORNEYS

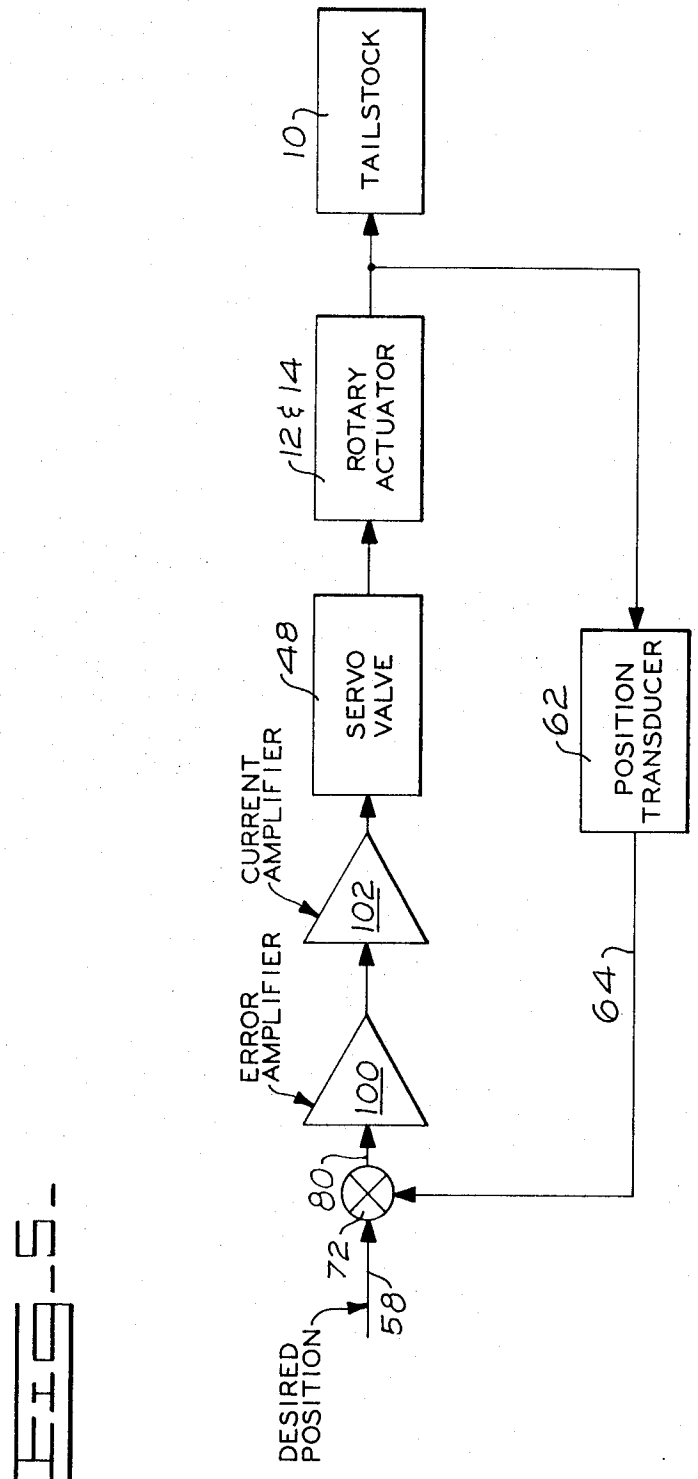


FIG-5-

INVENTORS
ROBERT G. MILLER
JOHN W. CRAYTON
CHARLES G. FARMER
RONALD L. SATZLER

BY
Fryer, Tjensvold, Feix, Phillips & Lampe
ATTORNEYS

APPARATUS AND CONTROL FOR ANGULAR ALIGNMENT OF INERTIA OR FRICTION WELDED PARTS

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention

This invention relates to a friction welding process and to a friction welding machine of the kind in which two parts are engaged in rotating contact under an axial load at a common interface to heat the interface to a hot plastic condition.

2. Description of the Prior Art

Two kinds of welding machines have been used for making such welds in the prior art.

A conventional friction welding machine produces relative rotation of the parts by direct drive from a motor.

In the inertia friction welding process the relative rotation of the parts is obtained from the energy stored in flywheels or other inertial masses.

In the inertia process the rotating spindle is allowed to run down without braking or declutching from the flywheels, and the relative rotational position of the parts is whatever results at the end of the weld cycle.

In the conventional friction welding process a brake is often used to stop rotation of the spindle, but the brake does not permit rotational alignment of the parts at the end of the weld cycle.

In many applications, rotational alignment of the parts being welded is not essential. For example, in the welding of valves, hose couplings, tubes to plates and parts having symmetrical geometry (such as rods and tubes) angular alignment is not essential.

In other instances, however, angular alignment is necessary. For example, angular alignment or indexing capability is necessary for the welding of splines, keyways, shafts and many other non-symmetrical shapes.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention permits the angular alignment of welds to within plus or minus 1° of arc.

The present invention comprises a tailstock indexing control which replaces the stationary chuck on a friction welding machine. During the last revolution of the weld cycle the tailstock indexing control rotates the tailstock until it is in alignment with the headstock.

The tailstock indexing control has two modes of operation, standby and index.

In standby, the tailstock position is held fixed, similar to a stationary chuck. In the index mode, the tailstock position is changed until angular alignment is achieved.

The tailstock indexing control has two parts, the analog control and the digital control.

The analog positions the tailstock.

The digital control switches the unit from standby mode to index mode.

The tailstock indexing control is basically a closed loop electrohydraulic position servo system.

In the position servo, the actual position of the tailstock is measured by a transducer and is converted into an electrical signal. The measured actual position is compared to a reference position. The difference between the two is the position error. This error signal is amplified by a voltage amplifier and is converted into a current.

The error current is supplied to a four way electro hydraulic servo valve where it is converted into oil flow.

The oil flow produces rotary hydraulic actuator velocity and hence changes the position of the tailstock. The tailstock position changes until the actual position equals the reference position and the error is zero.

At that point the flow and the tailstock velocity are zero, and alignment is achieved.

When the control is in the standby mode the reference position is a fixed voltage from potentiometer.

But during the index mode the reference position is the headstock position.

Therefore, when the control switches from standby to index, the reference position in the analog control switches from a fixed value to the headstock position.

The digital portion of the tailstock indexing control monitors specifid system parameters and switches the analog control from standby to index when appropriate conditions are satisfied. These conditions are (1) the welder must be in the process of producing a weld, (2) the headstock velocity must be less than a reference value and (3) the position of the headstock relative to the tailstock must be within a specified band.

The digital control logically accomplishes its task in the following manner.

Indexing occurs when three signals simultaneously appear at an "and" gate. Signal 1 comes from a weld relay when the welder is producing the weld. Signal 2 comes from a comparator when the headstock velocity falls below a reference value. Signal 3 exists for a fraction of a second from a monostable multivibrator when a synchro position error falls below a reference value. The short time of existence for Signal 3 confines the band of acceptable position error. Once indexing is initiated, it is internally latched through the logic.

The standby mode is obtained by depressing a reset switch. The reset switch inhibits the index logic loop and thus produces the standby mode.

The tailstock indexing control utilizes a brake on the headstock of the welding machine. The brake is applied during indexing to rapidly decelerate the headstock and to hold it still until alignment of the tailstock is completed.

The brake holds the headstock still while the tailstock is being aligned. The tailstock will attempt to rotate the headstock through the weld interface unless the brake provides the necessary reaction torque.

Position transducers are used to measure the difference in angular position between the headstock and the tailstock. In a particular embodiment of the invention the transducers selected are two synchros.

Other and further objects of the present invention will be apparent from the following description and claims and are illustrated in the accompanying drawings which, by way of illustration, show preferred embodiments of the present invention and the principles thereof and what are now considered to be the best modes contemplated for applying these principles. Other embodiments of the invention embodying the same or equivalent principles may be used and structural changes may be made as desired by those skilled in the art without departing from the present invention and the purview of the appended claims.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a side elevation view of a friction welding machine constructed in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 2 is a schematic view of the position error circuit used in the machine shown in FIG. 1;

FIG. 3 is a schematic view of the tailstock indexing control used in the machine shown in FIG. 1;

FIG. 4 is a block diagram of the tailstock indexing control used in the machine shown in FIG. 1; and

FIG. 5 is a block diagram of the closed loop electrohydraulic position servo system of the analog control.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

A friction welding machine constructed in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention is indicated generally by the reference numeral **11** in FIG. **1**.

The welding machine **11** shown in FIG. **1** is an inertia welding machine.

The machine **11** includes a tailstock indexing control indicated generally by the reference numeral **44** in FIG. **1**.

While the drawings illustrate and the following description describes the tailstock indexing control **44** in association with an inertia welder, the tailstock indexing control **44** may equally well be used with a conventional friction welder.

The welder **11** has a spindle or rotatable chuck **20**, a drive motor **22**, electrical controls **24**, a hydraulic source and a control **26**, a spindle drive shaft **28**, a clutch **30**, inertia weights **32**, a speed sensor **34** driven by the spindle shaft, and a hydraulic ram **36** to bring the workpieces **38** and **38'** into frictional engagement. All these parts are conventional in inertia welder arrangements.

In a standard inertia welder, the chuck **10** would be stationary at all times.

With the workpieces **38** in the chucks, the weld cycle is started by actuation of an appropriate switch in the electrical control **24** to power the drive motor **22**. The drive motor **22** then accelerates the fly wheel mass **32** through a one-way overrunning clutch **30**. As the flywheel and spindle are rotating a speed signal is returned to the control **24** from the sensor **34**. When a predetermined speed is attained, the control **24** removes power from the motor **22** and sends a signal to the hydraulic control **26** to actuate the ram **36** and to move the workpiece **38'** into frictional engagement with the workpiece **38**.

At this time drive is removed from the shaft **28** through action of the clutch **30**, but the inertia in the weights **32** continues to rotate the spindle until the stored energy is dissipated. The spindle then comes to rest, and the weld is complete. Speed sensitive circuitry may be incorporated in the control **24** to cause the hydraulic control **26** to actuate the ram **36** such as to vary the weld pressure at desired points in the weld cycle.

FIG. **1** shows the components of the tailstock indexing control **44** of the present invention associated with the inertia welder **11**.

The stationary chuck is replaced by a chuck **10** that is capable of being rotated through an arc of approximately 355° by a commerical Flo-Tork rotary actuator, here represented by cylinders **12** and **14**. Portions of the rods of these cylinders are in the form of racks, and the two racks engage a spline **16** on a shaft **18** rigidly attached to the chuck **10**.

The Flo-Tork rotary actuator is available as an off the shelf item from the Flo-Tork Incorporated, Orrville, Ohio.

As will be apparent from the description to follow, other actuator means may be used to produce the required relative rotation and desired angular alignment between the workpieces at the end of the weld cycle.

Since in the present instance the tailstock **10** is rotatable, it must be held stationary until the welder **11** shifts to the indexing mode to insure proper later alignment and also to permit proper heating of the weld interface. To accomplish this, a rotary potentiometer **40** is driven from a tailstock shaft **18** through a spline and timing belt arrangement to send a signal representing actual tailstock position over a line **42** to the indexing control **44** where it is matched with a desired position signal from a potentiometer (not shown) in the control.

During the major portion of the weld cycle (until the controls shift to the index mode) any mismatch in the potentiometer signals caused by slight motion being imparted to the tailstock by frictional engagement of the weld parts overcoming the hydraulic lock provided by the rotary actuator (**12** and **14**) results in a correction signal on line **46**.

The correction signal is supplied to an electrohydraulic valve **48** which directs oil to the rotary actuator in a proper manner to drive the tailstock back to where the actual and desired positions are again matched.

Thus, during this standby mode period, the tailstock is in effect a stationary device.

When the system indexes, the tailstock actuators are capable of turning the tailstock slightly less than 360°, hence alignment must be accomplished in the final revolution of the weld cycle. In addition, alignment cannot be accomplished until the spindle comes to rest. In view of these facts, added to the reality that indexing of the tailstock could turn the spindle through the weld interface, a disc brake arrangement is associated with the spindle.

The brake disc **50** is intergral with spindle **20** and its actuator is contained within the housing **52** which is grounded to the machine frame.

When the controls **44** shift to the indexing mode, a signal appears on line **54** to cause an electrohydraulic valve **56** to supply actuating pressure to the disc brake arrangement and to hold the spindle. Once the spindle is stopped, rapid and accurate alignment is achieved through operation of the tailstock indexing mechanism (**12**, **14** and **16**).

When the weld cycle is started the analog portion of control **44** is supplied a signal which is the result of matching the signal representing actual tailstock position from potentiometer **40** with a signal from a potentiometer in control **44** representing desired tailstock or reference position. The result is that tailstock **10** is maintained in a fixed position through control of the rotary actuator (**12** and **14**) by the analog control.

At the same time, the headstock position signal is being fed to the digital portion of control **44** over a lead **58** from a synchro transmitter **60**. A tailstock position signal is supplied to the digital control portion by a synchro differential **62** over a lead **64**.

These signals are combined in the control to provide an error signal.

A spindle speed signal is supplied to the control **44** over a lead **65** from the speed sensor **34** at all times. Logic circuits in the digital portion of control **44** sense

when spindle speed is proper and the error signal is within an acceptable band.

The control shifts from a standby to an index mode when proper conditions are met.

During the standby mode of operation, the reference position to the analog portion of the control **44** is a fixed voltage from a potentiometer within the control.

When the control switches to the index mode, the position reference signal and tailstock position signal from the potentiometer **40** are switched out of the circuit; and the referenced position signal to the analog control is the spindle position as sensed by the synchro **60.**

Switching also changes the source of the tailstock position signal from the potentiometer **40** to a synchro **62.**

Thus, the error signal then seen by the analog portion of the control becomes the difference between spindle position and tailstock position as seen by the synchro sensors.

The analog control is then basically a closed loop electrohydraulic position servo system as illustrated in FIG. **5.**

When indexing is initiated, a latched headstock braking signal appears on a line **54,** and a latched position error signal appears on a line **46.** This brakes and holds the headstock **20** and causes the tailstock to index until the error signal on the line **46** is 0 and alignment is achieved.

Once alignment is achieved, the latches on the index circuit and the brake circuit cause the spindle and tailstock to remain aligned until appropriate releases are actuated in the control **44.** This feature is beneficial in assuring a proper starting point for the next weld cycle.

FIG. **2** shows the position error circuit for the index mode which includes the synchro transmitter **60** (driven by the spindle) and the synchro differential **62** (driven by the tailstock).

An oscillator section **70** provides excitation to the synchro circuit and a reference for a demodulating bridge **72.** The oscillator frequency is not critical and can be between 4 and 10 KH_Z.

Relative rotation of the synchros **60** and **62** (actually **62** is stationary during the standby mode) causes an amplitude modulated signal to be produced in the stator windings of the tailstock synchro **62.** This signal is taken from the S1 and S3 windings, and is an amplitude modulated envelope of the excitation frequency. The envelope represents instantaneous angular difference (error) between the two synchros.

The signal on the lines **64** is applied to the bridge **72.** The bridge output is filtered by an RC filter consisting of capacitors **74** and **76** and a resistor **78.**

The output on the lead **80** is thus a changing DC signal representing the instantaneous error in alignment between the synchros **60** and **62.**

The error signal is averaged in an amplifier meter arrangement consisting of an amplifier **82** with an error gain adjustment **84,** an amplifier **86** with a meter gain adjustment **88,** and a meter **90.**

When the signal on the line **80** is changing rapidly, the meter cannot follow, but when the error signal is changing slowly, or is constant, the error or deviation from alignment can be read on the meter.

When the weld parts are aligned, the meter reads 0.

Any relative displacement between the spindle and tailstock position will be indicated on the meter. Thus alignment of the headstock and the tailstock can be accomplished when placing parts in the chucks through observation of the meter.

The basic requirement of the indexing system is that the parts to be welded are oriented in the angular relationship desired in the finish weld prior to start of the weld cycle.

FIG. **3** shows the tailstock indexing control circuitry.

In this circuit, an analog control controls an electrohydraulic valve **48** (here shown as the solenoid coil) which causes movement of the tailstock actuator (**12** and **14** of FIG. **1**).

The control for the coil **48** is effected by a voltage amplifier **100** and a current amplifier **102.** The purpose of the current amplifier **102** is to eliminate the electrical time constant of the hydraulic servo valve including the solenoid coil **48.**

In the standby mode an NPN transistor **104** is normally conductive causing a relay coil **106** to be energized. This closes the contacts **108** so that the error signal for driving the analog circuit is taken from the amplified difference between the potentiometer **40** associated with the tailstock and a reference potentiometer **40'** in a control box **44** (FIG. **1**).

In this state, the analog control responds to any changes in the wiper position of the potentiometer **40** due to frictional engagement of the weld parts to energize the coil **48** and to effect control of the tailstock actuator to keep the tailstock stationary.

As the weld cycle is started by energizing a weld relay in the electrical control **24** (FIG. **1**), an auxiliary contact **110** of the relay is closed to place a positive voltage at one input to a speed logic circuit **112** which tells the control that a weld is being produced.

This is one of three requirements that must be met before the control will shift to an index mode, as will be seen later.

As the welder drive accelerates, a speee signal is taken from sensor **34** (FIG. **1**) and applied over the lead **65** to a speed comparator circuit consisting of the amplifiers **114** and **116.**

A speed reference potentiometer **118** establishes the speed at which it is desired that indexing take place.

When a proper relationship exists between the actual speed signal at **65** and the desired speed reference at **118,** amplifier **116** will have an output which is applied to NAND gate **7** as its second input.

This is the second requirement for initiation of the index mode.

The error signal produced by the position error circuit of FIG. **2** is applied to the digital circuitry over the line **80.** From this point it is fed to two amplifiers **120** and **122.** The amplifier **122** has twice the gain of the amplifier **120.** Its output is fed over the line **124** and used as input to a synchro signal comparator **126.**

The output of the comparator **126** is differentiated and applied to a logic monostable multivibrator **128,** the action of which is to put out a 50 milisecond pulse each time the synchro error signal at the line **80** goes through **0** in the positive going direction.

This pulse is the required third input to the NAND gate **7** to cause shifting to the index mode.

The amplified error signal on line **124** is also fed to a second comparator **130** where it is differentiated at the input to the comparator **130** such that the output at the point **132** is the derivative of the original error signal (leads by 90°).

The derivative signal is fed to a logic circuit **134** comprised of a group of NAND gates.

The logic circuit **134** controls a sign changer circuit consisting of a transistor **136** and a reed relay **138.**

When the welder is operating in the standby mode, the logic circuit functions such that when there is a signal at the point **132,** there is no signal at the point **140,** and a PNP transistor **136** conducts to energize the reed relay **138.**

Thus, as the error signal is changing, the relay **138** pulses until the logic circuit is latched by the signal to index on the line **142.**

The logic circuits **112** and **134** are both comprised of NAND gates with internal latching. It is characteristic of these devices that when a 1 appears at all inputs, a 0 is produced at the output. A 0 on any one input results in a 1 at the output.

The logic circuit **112** is triggered to index when the three inputs are present at the NAND gate **7.** This causes a 0 input to the gate **6,** a 1 input to the gate **9,** and a 0 to the base of the transistor **144,** which says the system is ready to index.

At the same time, a 1 out from the gate **6** causes the gate **8** to have a 0 output, which latches the logic by causing the gate **6** to maintain a 1 output regardless of what occurs at the input to the gate **7.**

The pulsing of the logic circuit **134** causes intermittent operation of the relay contacts **146.** This causes the highly amplified and inverted error signal from **122** to be summed with the error signal input to the amplifier **120.**

When conditions are proper, and the index signal (0 voltage) is seen at the base of the transistor **144,** the same signal appears on the line **142** and causes the logic circuit **134** to latch at whatever state it happened to be at that instant. This says that conditions are right for indexing and that no changes can be made.

The interaction of the amplifiers **120** and **122** and the reed relay **138** causes an error signal at the point **148** that always causes tailstock indexing through energizing the coil **48** to be in proper direction to drive the error signal at the point **148** toward 0 as alignment is being achieved.

As indexing is initiated, the transistor **144** conducts to energize reed relay **150.**

This closes the contacts **152,** shutting off the transistor **104.**

The contacts **108** open as the contacts **154** close to shift the input to the analog circuit from the potentiometer reference to the headstock synchro reference.

The logic circuit **112** is latched when a 0 signal appears at the output of the NAND gate **9.**

This causes the transistor **144** and the reed relay **150** to also latch in the index mode and further latches the logic circuit **134** because of the 0 voltage on the line **142.**

Simultaneously with the above-noted shift to the index mode, the indexing signal is also fed over a lead **142'** to the input of a brake reference circuit consisting of amplifier **160,** transistor **162,** and a reed relay **164.**

The output from the amplifier **160** fires the transistor **162** to energize the reed relay **164.**

When the relay operates it latches through its own contacts **166** and also closes contacts **168** to cause a current amplifier **170** to energize the coil **56** which is the actuating coil for electrohydraulic valve **56** (FIG. 1).

This sets the brake on the spindle to rapidly bring it to a stop.

Once the spindle stops, the synchro reference signal from the synchro **60** becomes fixed; and the error signal to the analog positioning loop (the amplifiers **100** and **102**) energizes the coil **48** of the electrohydraulic valve controlling the rotary actuator to cause the tailstock to be driven rapidly into alignment with the spindle.

At this time alignment is achieved and the input at amplifier **100** sees 0 error.

When alignment is achieved, the spindle brake remains actuated because of the clamp provided by closing of the contacts **166.**

The indexing control is also clamped because of the latch on the logic circuits **112** and **134.**

Any motion of the tailstock is quickly sensed by the synchro circuits (FIG. **2**), and an input error signal is seen on the lead **80** to cause the rotary actuator to maintain the tailstock aligned with the braked spindle or headstock.

The finished weld part can be removed from the chucks and new weld parts inserted in the chucks in proper angular relationship and the welder is ready to start a new cycle.

To release the two chucks, a reset switch **178** must be depressed to unlatch the logic circuitry and to put the controls back into the standby mode, and a brake release switch **180** must be actuated to cause the amplifier **160** to cut off and to allow reed relay **164** to restore.

FIG. **4** shows the tailstock indexing control in block diagram form.

While we have illustrated and described the preferred embodiments of our invention, it is to be understood that these are capable of variation and modification, and we therefore do not wish to be limited to the precise details set forth, but desire to avail ourselves of such changes and alterations as fall within the purview of the following claims.

We claim:

1. In a friction welding machine of the kind in which two parts are clamped in a rotatable spindle and a tailstock respectively, pressed together and rotated relative to one another until the entire interface is heated to a hot plastic condition, alignment means for rotatively aligning the parts in a desired angular alignment at the end of the weld and including actuator means for turning the tailstock part through the hot plastic interface to a desired angular orientation with respect to the other part at the end of the weld cycle, indexing means for measuring the angular orientation of the parts and for actuating the actuator means to align the parts, the indexing means including a position error circuit having synchronized position sensors associated respectively with the spindle and tailstock; and control means effective to retain the indexing means in a standby mode until the interface has been heated to the plastic condition during the weld cycle and effective to place the indexing means in an indexing mode after the interface has been heated to a plastic condition at the end of the weld cycle.

2. A friction welding machine as defined in claim **1** including clamping means for holding one part against rotation during the indexing mode when the actuator means are activated to align the parts.

* * * * *